

INTERVIEW

with the Management Board



Jo Maes and Annemieke den Otter, Ordina CEO and CFO, look back at 2017

What are your thoughts when you look back at 2017?

Jo: “Our top priority in 2017 was growth. Growth in revenues and result, but also growth with new employees. We all worked incredibly hard to achieve that and it worked. In the second half of the year, we recorded growth in revenues in both the Netherlands and in Belgium/Luxembourg and we improved our result. We stepped up our recruitment efforts to boost growth with our own employees. We hired more new people in 2017 than ever before, and I take that as an encouraging sign. However, the remarkably dynamic labour market is making it a real challenge to retain our professionals. We will continue to devote a great deal of attention to retaining and incentivising our talented employees.”

“In addition to this, one of our primary focuses was on delivering added value to our clients. And that also paid off last year. For one, Ordina took first place in the category Outplacement and Outsourcing

in the MT1000 list of best service providers in the Netherlands.”

What is the financial position of Ordina?

Annemieke: “Ordina has continued to strengthen its financial position in a number of ways. We once again closed the year with a positive cash balance. That is an important indicator of financial health. And we saw a return to revenue growth in the Netherlands in the third quarter of 2017. That will boost our profitability. In addition, Belgium/Luxembourg delivered another strong performance.”

Revenues and result declined in the first half of the year. What measures did you take to rectify this?

Annemieke: “The first half results were under pressure. So we intervened and

‘In the second half of the year, we recorded growth in revenues.’

reduced overheads. We also took a close look at our internal processes. By simplifying these support processes and reducing management and staff numbers, we managed to make the Ordina organisation more efficient and effective. We also chose to focus on five business propositions, solutions we can unite behind as a unified Ordina. All these measures helped us to improve results in the second half of the year.”

Why did Ordina opt for five business propositions?

Jo: “Market know-how is essential. That requires an external viewpoint. Conversations with our clients and a thorough analysis of developments in the market revealed a number of key themes that are relevant right now. We subsequently combined our expertise and know-how into five business propositions based on those themes: High performance teams, Intelligent data-driven organisations, Security & privacy, Digital acceleration and Business platforms. By defining these five propositions, we have created a clearly recognisable go-to-market strategy and improved our market positioning. And this has been successful, as we now have more than 60 High performance teams working at our clients and we are also booking results with our other propositions.”

How is Ordina dealing with the shortages on the labour market?

Annemieke: “Shortages in the labour market are a given for Ordina and virtually every company in the IT sector, and that is not going to change anytime soon. It is more

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likely to get worse. This is why we increased our investments in the recruitment of employees last year. For instance, we launched the recruitment campaign ‘Do you look beyond the code?’. And we also developed an internal programme to recruit new colleagues via the networks of our own employees. This helped us to intensify our recruitment efforts and we actually managed to recruit more employees in 2017 than ever before.”

“The fact that we are not a niche-player, but also not a multinational, makes Ordina unique as an employer. We are a local player with short lines of communication, a low-threshold culture and broad career opportunities, which the employees themselves can influence. And they have the opportunity to work - in teams - on interesting assignments with real impact.”

How can Ordina remain attractive to its current employees?

Jo: “Ordina wants to deliver high performance, with its own enthusiastic and enterprising professionals. We can only do that by creating the best possible working conditions that provide room for personal development and career opportunities. Because the pace of change in the IT world is so rapid, our employees have to keep their expertise up-to-date, so we can anticipate and respond to the market demands of tomorrow. You can only do that if you have an agile organisation. We offer our employees an environment in which they can continue to develop their know-how and expertise, both in the short term and the long term. For instance, last summer we organised a number of boot camps, giving our colleagues the opportunity to gain certificates in a number of new technologies.”

What are your views on technological developments and the impact they have on society?

Jo: “Technology is more and more conspicuously present and has an impact on our daily lives and how we work. There has been debate recently on the question of whether we are not going too far with automation and whether robotisation is not putting jobs at risk. We believe IT and robotisation offer new opportunities and new types of jobs. We believe that new technological developments will create jobs. In the Benelux, we are seeing the development of a manufacturing industry that would have been impossible in the past. And thanks to new technologies, Ordina can compete with low-wage



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countries on the IT front and actually safeguard employment. But you can only do that if you add value.”

Innovation is one of Ordina’s spearheads. What is the current status?

Jo: “Two years ago, we set up the Innovation cluster, to provide a platform for innovative technologies, concepts and propositions. We have now reached a stage in which innovation is supported across the entire Ordina organisation and we can surprise our clients with complete innovative solutions and projects that make new technology relevant to their business. That was also clear during the most recent edition of the Ordina Innovation Days, with the theme ‘Innovative strength’. During the various sessions, in which Ordina colleagues presented ‘their’ projects and cases, it became very clear that innovation is a basic prerequisite for added value.”

How do you mobilise innovative strength to realise structural innovation?

Jo: “That is the big question a lot of organisations are wrestling with and we have structured our strategy to respond to that question. Innovation revolves around speed and agility: short-cyclical, working in teams towards clearly defined targets, with high levels of transparency on the progress made. That is where our High performance teams come into play. They help organisations to accelerate their transformation processes. Together, we create sustainable innovation. What this boils down to is that we want to make the jump from being our clients’ IT partner to being their IT and business partner. This means that we look beyond the IT side and proactively come up with innovative business solutions for our clients.”